THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) During the visit of President Hu Jintao of China to India from November 20-23, 2006, the two sides exchanged views on the boundary question. It was agreed that the early resolution of the boundary question would advance the basic interests of the two countries and should be pursued as a strategic objective. The two sides directed the Special Representatives on the boundary question to intensify their work to expeditiously explore the framework of a boundary settlement on the basis of the Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles signed in April 2005.

Infiltration of Pak militants

1688. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while Pakistan President issued joint declaration with Prime Minister in Havana in September this year, Government had confirmed report that highly trained Pak militants have crossed over and holed up inaccessible terrains and concentrated in North Kashmir and took refuge in town like Kupwara, Baramullah etc; and

(b) if so, Government's response and reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Government are aware that despite fluctuations, infiltration of Pakistani militants continues from across the LoC. India has conveyed to Pakistan, at the highest level, that the dialogue process between the two countries would be undermined unless Pakistan takes effective action to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, including training camps, launch pads and communication links between terrorist groups on the Indian side and their handlers on the Pakistan side. Pakistan needs to take these steps in fulfilment of the commitment given by it in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004 that it would not permit any territory under its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. Pakistan has always denied its role in supporting cross border terrorism. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met Pakistani President Gen. Musharraf on September 16, 2006. During the talks it was agreed to put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify

and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations. It was agreed to discuss mutually acceptable options for a peaceful negotiated settlement of all issues between India and Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Passport applications in Jharkhand

†1689. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passport applications received each year during the last three years in Jharkhand and the total number of passports issued;

(b) the period within which the passports are generally issued after receiving the application;

(c) whether Government proposes to expedite the procedure of issuing passports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) The number of passport applications received each year during the last three years and the total number of passports issued in Jharkhand are as under:

Years	Total number of passport Applications received	Total number of passports issued
2003	24,262	10,249
2004	19,661	15,975
2005	22,127	22,815

(b) Passports are issued after receiving clear Police Verification Reports, in Jharkhand, which take usually 3-4 weeks and thereafter passports are issued. Passports are also issued expeditiously under the Tatkal Scheme on post-police verification basis.

(c) and (d) The Government has been continually taking a number of steps to speed up the issuance of passports including:

(i) Introduction of high-speed passport printers for enhancement of output.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.